

# TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

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## Outdoor Lighting Policy

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Approved by City Council –9/30/97  
Amended by City Council –5/17/12

### Code Sections and Fast Track Guide for New Residences:

Article of Title 10 Chapter 2 of the Site Development Ordinance outlines criteria for outdoor lighting. In particular, Section 10-2.1005 indicates that outdoor lighting should use “the minimum wattage lights which will safely illuminate the area” and that outdoor light sources “shall be shielded so as not to be directly visible from off-site.” Goal IV (C3) of the Fast Track Guide for New Residences suggests that exterior lights be carefully placed to prevent light shining onto neighboring houses. The Zoning and Site Development Ordinances limit lighting within the property line setbacks to “driveway light fixtures, limited to one fixture on each side of a driveway, for a maximum of two (2) fixtures per lot,” but additional fixtures may be approved if necessary for safety.

### Intent:

The purpose of Zoning and Site Development Ordinances and the Fast Track Guide regarding outdoor lighting is to assure that the open and peaceful character of the Town is maintained, that adequate lighting is provided for the enjoyment of outdoor use areas, lighting does not intrude on the privacy of neighbors, light pollution is reduced, and the glare is minimized onto adjacent properties. The intent of this policy is to clarify the types and numbers of lighting fixtures that are generally consistent with the ordinances and the Fast Track Guide, yet to allow flexibility for additional lighting when it is necessary for safety purposes or where it is not visible from off the site.

### Policy:

1. The number of lights on the exterior of a structure should be limited to providing for one light per doorway, with the exception of two lights at the main entrance, at double doors or garage doors, etc., and additional lights only where the Planning Director or Planning Commission determines they are needed for safety.
2. Pathway and driveway lighting should be restricted to low-height fixtures and should be spaced the maximum distance apart which will still provide for safe use. In order to avoid a “runway” appearance, it is recommended that lighting be placed on only one side of the driveway or walkway, or alternate from one side to the other. Recessed louvered lights are suggested for walkways and steps.

3. Light fixtures should be shielded or downlights, so that the light source is not visible from off site. Exceptions may be permitted in limited locations (entry, garage, etc.) or where the fixtures would not be visible from off site.
4. Downlighting from trees is acceptable if provided for safety or for outdoor use areas, where minimal in number, and where the light source is not visible from off site.
5. Uplighting of trees is not allowed, unless it is clearly demonstrated that the number of such lights are minimal and the glow of the uplighting would not be visible from off site.
6. Spotlights should be limited in number, and directed away from clear view of neighbors. Shielding of spotlights with shrouds or louvers is suggested.
7. High intensity discharge lighting, such as mercury vapor, high and low pressure sodium, and metal halide lighting, is prohibited.
8. Lighting within the property line setbacks is limited to two driveway light fixtures ~~only~~, for the purpose of locating and identifying the site. No lights are allowed in side or rear yard setback areas, except where determined to be necessary for safety.
9. The Planning Commission and/or staff may allow lighting different from that outlined above when the proposed outdoor lighting is determined to be necessary to safely illuminate the area, or where the size of the property and/or extensive screening will assure that the light source is not visible from off site.
10. Artificial lighting is not permitted for tennis courts or other recreation/sports courts.
11. Pool lighting is allowed under the following conditions:
  - Lights are placed beneath the surface of the water in the pool or spa to illuminate the water
  - Other exterior lights used to illuminate the surrounding area use the minimum number and wattage of lighting which will safely illuminate the area
  - No direct light is cast beyond the immediate area of the pool

#### Definitions

- \* **Glare** - Lighting entering the eye directly from luminaries or indirectly from reflective surfaces that causes visual discomfort or reduced visibility.
- \* **Light Pollution** - Any adverse effect of artificial light including, but not limited to, glare, light trespass, sky glow, energy waste, compromised safety and security, and impacts on the nocturnal environment.